

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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R 050440Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3821

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 1767

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: INDO-US RELATIONS AND THE EFFECT ON US RELATIONS WITH
INDIA'S NEIGHBORS

1. AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE BEEN MAKING IT CLEAR TO ALL THE SENIOR INDIANS I HAVE BEEN SEEING THAT IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-US RELATIONS JUST CANNOT TAKE PLACE WHILE THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER HIGH INDIAN LEADERS CONTINUE TO POKE AWAY AT THE US. I APPRECIATE THE TOUGH PARALLEL LINE TAKEN BY JOE SISCO WITH AMBASSADOR KAUL IN WASHINGTON. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE EFFECT OF ALL THIS WILL BE. INDIA CERTAINLY HAS AN INTEREST IN GETTING THE THINGS FROM US IT NEEDS. THE POINT I AM TRYING TO GET ACROSS IS THAT THESE MAY NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE IF RELATIONS ARE BAD. I DO NOT ASK FOR MUCH; I WOULD BE PERFECTLY HAPPY IF MRS. GANDHI WERE SIMPLY TO IGNORE THE US.

2. MY REASON FOR WRITING NOW IS TO EXPLAIN WHY I AM PURSUING THIS HARD LINE. IT IS NOT BECAUSE I BELIEVE WE HAVE SO LITTLE INTEREST HERE THAT WE SHOULD NOT CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IN INDIA AND THE REGION GENERALLY. IT IS IN FACT BECAUSE I BELIEVE THERE ARE SOME THINGS OF IMPORTANCE TO US HERE AND PURSUING A HARD LINE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY TACTICS WHICH STAND ANY CHANCE OF GETTING US WHAT WE WANT. MY POINT IS WE STILL WANT STABILITY IN INDIA AND STABILITY IN THE REGION. WE STILL WANT AN INDIA WHERE THE RUSSIANS AREN'T IN CONTROL. WE STILL BELIEVE INDIA WILL BE IMPORTANT TO US AS A MODERATE LDC IN THE ONGOING INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEBATE.

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3. CONSEQUENTLY, IT SEEMS PARTICULARLY IMPORRANT TO ME THAT WE NOT COMPLICATE THE EFFORT WE ARE MAKING IN INDIA BY SHIFTS IN OUR RELATIONS WITH INDIA'S NEIGHBORS WHICH THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT SEE AS THREATENING. OUR PROBLEMS WITH MRS. GANDHI AND HER GOVERNMENT ARE SERIOUS BUT THEY ARE ESSENTIALLY BILATERAL. AND IT WOULD BE AMISTAKE I THINK TO COMPOUND THEM BY BRINGING IN ELEMENTS SUGGESTING A CHANGE IN THE WHOLE US POSITION TOWARD THE SUBCONTINENTAL AREA.

4. AT EVERY CROSSROADS IN THE PUNJAB THERE IS A SHERMAN TANK AS A CONSTANT REMINDER THAT THE US WAS INDIA'S ENEMY IN THE PAST. IT WOULD BE FOLLY TO ADD ARMS ON THE PAKISTANI (OR BENGALI) SIDE WHICH WOULD ONLY DECORATE MORE CROSSROADS IN THE FUTURE. WE ARE TRYING TO GET MRS. GANDHI'S ATTENTION BY THE TOUGH BILATERAL LINE WE ARE TAKING. WE DO NOT, HOWEVER, WANT TO TOTALLY CONCEN-
TRATE HER FOCUS AND FACILITATE HER DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS BY PROVIDING REAL AMMUNITION FOR HER TO USE AGAINST US ON THE SUPERSENSITIVE ISSUE OF INDIAN SECURITY AND HER RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH AND NEPAL.

5. I AM SURE THERE WILL BE ISSUES OTHER THAN ARMS THAT RAISE THE SAME QUESTION--THINGS WE WILL BE TEMPTED TO DO FOR OUR FRIENDS, THE PAKISTANIS AND BENGALIS. THE BENGALI EFFORT TO GET US TO HELP THEM GET RID OF A TOUBLESOME GENERAL (NURUZZAMAN) IS A CASE IN POINT. I HEARTILY AGREE WITH THE WAY WASHINGTON IS HANDLING THIS ONE. I DON'T INTEND TO COMMENT ON EACH ONE OF THESE THINGS AS THEY COME UP BUT THOUGHT IT WORTHWHILE TO ELABORATE ON THE POLICY I AM FOLLOWING HERE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NEWDE01767
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P840099-0234
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760279/aaaacrkg.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by ullricre>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDO-US RELATIONS AND THE EFFECT ON US RELATIONS WITH INDIA'S NEIGHBORS
TAGS: PFOR, PREL, IN, US, PK, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006